

University of Nevada, Reno



New Student Initiatives



Read Inside

Adjusting to College

Academic Support

Health & Wellness

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New Student Initiatives

Dear Reader,

We are strong believers in the importance of a student's support system as they tackle the challenges and opportunities of college. Whether you are the parent, grandparent, stepparent, guardian, family friend, counselor, coach, or mentor of a college student, you can have a positive impact on the student you care about and their success.

This guide touches on many important and helpful topics. There are additional resources on CollegiateParent.com.

Sincerely,
CollegiateParent

CollegiateParent Insider

CollegiateParent provides print and digital resources for families of college students via our website and in partnership with colleges and universities across the US. Please visit COLLEGIATEPARENT.COM to get our latest tips, and connect with us on social media.

INSIDER CONTENT (PART 2—PART 4) BY:
Amy Baldwin, Ed.D.; Lori Bender; Marybeth Bock; Tami Campbell; Rob Danzman, MS, NCC, LCMHC; Kate Gallop; Ianni Le; Bridget Lockhead; Amy Mezulis; MJ O'Leary; Lisa Paniccia; Vicki Nelson; LaTrina Rogers; and CollegiateParent staff. To learn about our contributors, visit their author pages on COLLEGIATEPARENT.COM.

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Kade O'Connor
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Photo Caption:
Manzanita Lake

✓ 3. Scope out services and have a plan.

All students, but particularly those who have already experienced mental health issues, should have a plan in place in case things get too difficult to handle. Call or make an appointment with the campus mental health or counseling center to learn what services are available.

If your student is already in the care of a psychiatrist or psychologist, make plans to continue that care with a clinician close to college. (The campus mental health center may keep a list of convenient off-campus providers who work well with students.) Your student should have regular check-ins with a professional to monitor any changes. They can also register with disability support services to access helpful accommodations.

✓ 4. Forget stigma.

If your student is experiencing mental health issues, prioritize getting help over any concerns about tarnishing their transcript or reputation. Some students will need time off from school to recover and get back on track. Each college has its own policy about granting medical leave — you can contact the Dean of Students office to find out the procedure for taking a temporary leave of absence.

✓ 5. Stay in touch.

Make time for regular calls or FaceTime conversations in addition to texting your student. It's easier to hear in their voice when something is bothering them than it is to read into a text message.

Keep an eye out for symptoms of depression, anxiety, hopelessness, irritability, restlessness, sleep difficulties, loss of appetite, suicidal thoughts, unexplained aches and pains, and tearfulness. A sudden drop in academic performance or loss of interest in previously enjoyed activities are other signs that support is needed.

September is National Suicide Prevention Month for a reason. Don't be afraid to ask, "How are you really doing?" Create a verbal bond that encourages them to seek you (or someone else) out. As the adult, shed the shame of staying connected with your student despite society's convincing you that you are overprotective. There's a difference between hovering over and solving your child's problems for them and simply listening to their voice, laying eyes on their appearance, and noticing behavior changes.

*— Tips from Active Minds,
Lori Bender, and Ianni Lee*

Supporting Mental Health

A Checklist for Families



Mental health issues are far more common than many people realize. Fifty percent of us will encounter a mental health challenge in our lifetime. And whether or not they have a mental health diagnosis, increasing numbers of college students report feeling scared, sad, unsafe, lonely, or helpless.

While starting college is exciting, some students find themselves overwhelmed by the transition to an unfamiliar environment full of new pressures and expectations. It takes most students a while — even a full semester — to feel at home and find their place on campus. Homesickness can linger into late fall, just as days grow shorter and academic pressure heats up.

The good news: Awareness and open lines of communication — with family members, professors/instructors, coaches, and friends — can go a long way toward making sure no student struggles alone. Check out these tips on how to empower and support your new college student.

The Checklist

✓ 1. Prepare them.

It's likely that your student, or one of their roommates or friends, will experience a mental health issue while at college. Prepare your student by talking about mental health on a regular basis. Review together what campus resources are available if they're ever in a position to help a friend. By maintaining a dialogue, you'll help them feel comfortable coming to you with questions and problems without fear of being judged.

✓ 2. Allow mistakes.

Perfection is not a realistic goal and it's important to let your student know that you support them no matter what. Mistakes and failure are an unavoidable part of life and we can learn from them. A perfect GPA isn't worth it if it comes at the expense of your student's emotional well-being.



Welcome to the University of Nevada, Reno!

Dear Parents, Families, and Friends,

On behalf of the Division of Student Services, welcome to the University of Nevada, Reno! We are thrilled to have you and your student join the Wolf Pack family. This is an exciting time filled with opportunities for growth, learning, and connection. As you embark on this journey, know that we are here to support you every step of the way.

As parents, family members, and friends, we recognize that your support, encouragement, and guidance are invaluable to your student's success. We value your partnership. This Family Handbook is designed with you in mind, providing valuable information, resources, and guidance to help navigate this new chapter alongside your student.

Please take advantage of the many support services and opportunities at the University of Nevada, Reno. From academic advising and career services to wellness programs and leadership opportunities, we are committed to providing a comprehensive support network to help students thrive academically, socially, and personally. We look forward to partnering with you and witnessing your student's incredible accomplishments in the years ahead!

Welcome to the Wolf Pack family!

Go Pack!

Heather Speed, EdD

Vice President
Division of Student Services

Important Contacts

Department	Phone	Location	Website
Admissions and Records	775-784-4700	Fitzgerald Student Services, 2nd floor	unr.edu/admissions/records
Athletics	775-784-4388	Legacy Hall, 232	nevadawolfpack.com
Athletics Tickets	775-348-PACK		nevadawolfpack.com/sports/tickets
University Advising Center	775-784-4684	PSAC, 405	unr.edu/liberal-arts/academic-advising
Cashier's Office	775-784-6915	Fitzgerald Student Services, 3rd floor	unr.edu/campus-business/controllers-office/cashiers-office
Computer Help Desk	775-682-5000	Knowledge Center	unr.edu/oit
Disability Resource Center	775-784-6000	PSAC, 230	unr.edu/drc
E.L. Wiegand Fitness Center	775-784-1225	E.L. Wiegand Fitness Center	unr.edu/building-directory/el-wiegand-fitness-center
Financial Aid & Scholarships	775-784-4666	Fitzgerald Student Services, 3rd floor	unr.edu/financial-aid

Responsible Drinking

Most families have strict rules about alcohol in high school, but in college an abstinence-only policy may not be practical. Though some students choose a sober lifestyle, the most recent survey from the NIH found that about half of college students drink, with nearly a third (29%) having engaged in binge drinking in the month preceding the survey.

By talking regularly with your student about the campus party scene, their experiences with alcohol, and what it means to drink responsibly, you can continue to have a positive influence. These conversations require that you know your facts, be honest and open-minded, and be ready to listen. For more, visit niaaa.nih.gov/publications/brochures-and-fact-sheets/college-drinking.

Don't Forget About Marijuana

With marijuana legal and readily available in many parts of the country, cannabis-related health problems for teens and young adults are on the rise. Learn more about the trends and risks of drug use in college and find advice specifically for parents at nida.nih.gov/research-topics/college-age-young-adults.

Whenever you see or talk to your student, help them reflect on their current health habits and make adjustments based on their experience of campus life.

— Lori Bender, Marybeth Book, RB Danzmann, and MJ O'Leary


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- ✓ Success Rate Well-Exceeds Industry Averages

- ✓ Evidence-Based, Proprietary Elevate[™] Curriculum
- ✓ Dedicated Family Advisor and Family Counseling Sessions
- ✓ Weekly Alumni Meetings Open to All Graduates
- ✓ Strategies that Ensure Sustained Recovery



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www.ElevateRehab.org

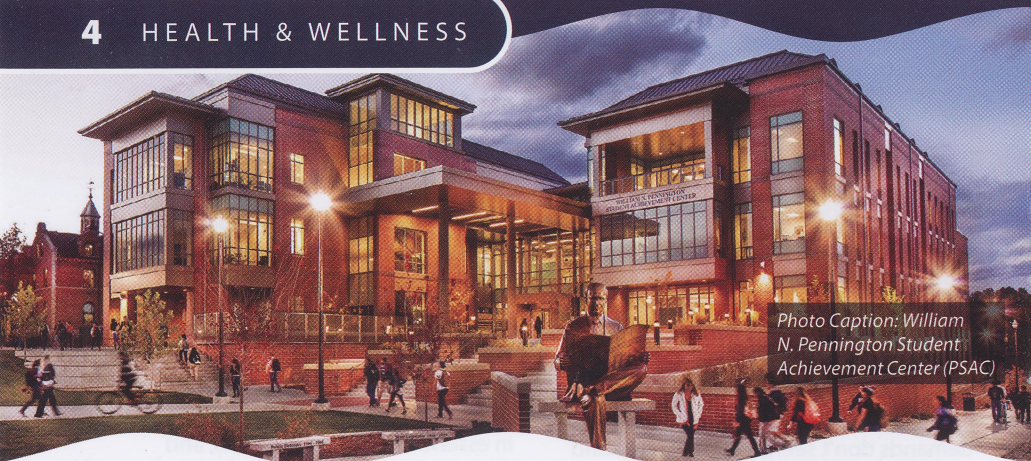


Photo Caption: William N. Pennington Student Achievement Center (PSAC)

What are some of the other health and safety topics you want to touch on with your college student as the semester gets started and throughout the year? Here are just a few.

How Health Insurance Works

Go over their coverage, whether they're on the school's health plan or still covered by your family insurance, and how and where to access services. Will they use the campus health center for all their non-emergency needs, or go there just for the easy/free stuff (such as flu shots and treatment for minor illnesses) and see a provider or specialist in the local community? Do they know how to fill their own prescriptions?

What To Do If They Get Sick

Your student should have a first aid kit with a thermometer, bandaids, and basic over-the-counter remedies as well as a few rapid COVID tests. Talk through possible scenarios, ranging from treating a cold to how to know if it's something more serious like influenza. A few basic reminders:

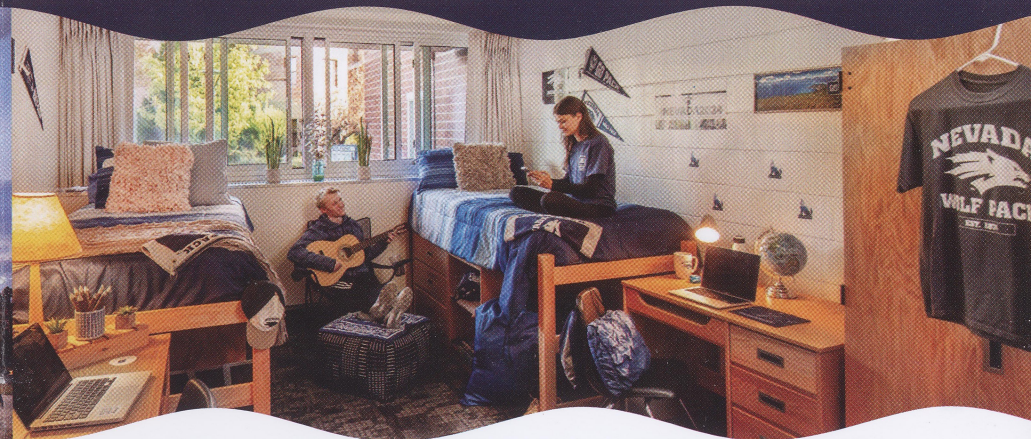
- ➔ Wash your hands frequently.
- ➔ Stay up to date on vaccinations.

- ➔ Don't go to classes or the dining hall when you're symptomatic (fever, sore throat, cough, vomiting/diarrhea, etc.).
- ➔ Don't hesitate to visit the health center, and definitely go if symptoms don't improve after a few days.

Healthy Relationships and Sexual Health

Students enter college with a wide range of experience in relationships, and families vary widely in how comfortable and open they are when it comes to talking about sex. You may think you're done having "the talk," or that your student is smart and mature enough to make good decisions. But sexual health concerns change over time, and for many reasons it's important to keep engaging with our kids on this topic rather than assuming they understand consent and how to practice safe sex, especially in this new environment.

Wondering how to break the ice? Find helpful information and conversation starters: collegiateparent.com/health-safety/talk-about-sex-with-your-student.



Department	Phone	Location	Website
Fraternity & Sorority Life	775-682-6848	JSCU, 203	unr.edu/fraternity-and-sorority-life
The Multicultural Center	775-784-4936	JSCU, 3rd floor	unr.edu/multicultural-center
McNair Scholarship Program	775-784-6044	PSAC, 450	unr.edu/mcnair
Nevada WolfShop	775-784-6597	JCSU, 1st floor	unr.bncollege.com/
New Student Initiatives	775-784-4306	JSCU, 203	unr.edu/new-student-initiatives
Office of International Student Services	775-784-6874	Fitzgerald Student Services, 120	unr.edu/oiss
Parking Services	775-784-4654	Parking Services	unr.edu/parking
Residential Life, Housing & Food Service	775-784-1113	Juniper Hall, 1st floor	unr.edu/housing
TRIO Scholars Program	775-784-6044	PSAC, 4th floor	unr.edu/trio
WolfCard	775-784-4001	JCSU, 1st floor	unr.edu/wolfcard

Academic Calendar

Fall 2025

August

- 22 Fri. Fall semester fees due
The first payment due for those on a payment plan
Final day for initial registration
- 25 Mon. First day of classes

September

- 1 Mon. Labor Day (no classes; campus closed)
- 4 Thurs. Final day to receive 100% refund if dropping individual classes or withdrawing
Final day to change from letter grade to S/U or S/U to letter grade or audit to credit
- 22 Mon. Second fee payment due for those on payment plan

October

- 1 Wed. Deadline to apply for December graduation
- 3 Fri. Final day to request a 50% refund and completely withdraw
- 22 Wed. Third payment due for those on payment plan
- 28 Tues. Final day to drop classes and receive a "W"
- 31 Fri. Nevada day (no classes; campus closed)
Final day to change from credit to audit

November

- 11 Tues. Veterans Day (no classes; campus closed)
- 22 Sat. Fourth/Final fee payment due for those on payment plan
- 27 Thurs. Thanksgiving Day (no classes; campus closed)
- 28 Fri. Family Day (no classes; campus closed)

December

- 6 Sat. Commencement
- 10 Wed. Prep day
- 17 Wed. Instruction ends
- 19 Fri. Fall semester ends. Last day faculty on campus.

Get Ahead of Stress

Some amounts of stress are necessary to study productively, maintain motivation, and accomplish tasks, but the negative effects of stress (anxiety, exhaustion, hopelessness) can disrupt daily living and thriving. Students can learn to manage the pressures of college so the demands don't seem as unbearable and the stress response is deactivated.

Five ways to manage stress!

1 Use a planner and create a study schedule.

Calendars and planners are a foundation for success and counteract a lot of mental health symptoms. By planning, you avoid the panic that comes with last-minute cramming.

Every hour of the day can be scheduled. Write it out, draw it, color it, mind map it, keep it visible. Include:

- Study breaks, sleep, recreation
- 1.5–2 hours of study per class, then break
- Switch classes for the next 2-hour study session
- Use "[backwards planning](#)" if this works for you

2 Determine your ideal study spot and times.

- Pick the place you feel the most productive, calm, and focused. Keep going to this spot for a few weeks to train your body and brain for study mode.
- Notice what time of day/night you study best. Use this time slot to prepare for your most challenging classes.

- Be aware of what distracts you: cell phone, friends, Netflix. These things belong in your life, but not when you're studying.

- When your thoughts get stuck, or drift away from the material at hand, "reset" by standing up to move and stretch.

3 Hydrate and nourish.

Many college students eat a diet high in fat and sodium and lacking in essential vitamins, minerals, and fiber. They also lean heavily on sugar-sweetened and energy drinks.

Encourage your student to be mindful when they head into the campus dining hall. The goal is to limit fast food to an occasional choice and integrate more healthy items into their diet: fruits and veggies, legumes, nuts and seeds, whole grains, lean meats, and fish. In addition, it's a good idea to have their water bottle always handy.

4 Attend to self-care.

- Notice how often and how much you move your body. A short walk, jumping jacks, or push-ups will suffice if you can't fit in a work-out.
- Engage in a fun activity: frisbee, basketball, a dance or fitness class.
- Take advantage of campus social and counseling resources.
- Practice calming breathing exercises.
- Take an extra shower a day during exam weeks. Get a haircut or manicure. Pamper yourself!

5 Fill your brain with positive mantras:

"I'm thankful everyday for the opportunity to go to college. I'm right where I need to be! With this comes tough times. I am tough enough — I will be just fine."

Key Health Talks to Have with Your Student

It's challenging for young adults living on their own for the first time to take proper care of themselves.

Healthy behaviors reinforce one another; parents can help their college students understand the interconnectedness of sufficient sleep, proper nutrition, and regular exercise. Let's distill it into two basic priorities: getting enough sleep and managing stress.

The Importance of Good Sleep Habits

College students are notorious for being sleep deprived. Communal living arrangements, academic pressure, and FOMO (fear of missing out) are the main contributors. But without sufficient sleep, your student will find it harder to learn and to remember what they learned, and they will lack the energy to make the most of their college experience.

Why eight hours? What happens when we sleep?

Our bodies are busy while we slumber. During sleep we fix damaged tissue, toxins are eliminated, hormones essential for growth and appetite control are released and restocked, and energy is restored. When sleep is cut short, the body doesn't have time to complete this work.

Health risks of sleep deprivation include:

- **Impaired cognitive function:** Even one night of sleeping less than six hours can impact your ability to think clearly the next day.
- **Increased risk of accidents:** Sleep deprivation slows reaction time; you're three times more likely to be in a car crash if you're tired.
- **Increased emotional intensity:** The part of the brain responsible for emotional regulation can be up to 60% more reactive when you've slept poorly.

Pass along these tips for deep sleep:

- Sleep in a dark room (or use a sleep mask).
- Save your bed for rest; find other places to study.
- Turn off screens at least an hour before bedtime.
- Stop eating at least two hours before bedtime, and avoid processed/junk food that makes your body work extra hard during the night to remove the toxins, leaving less time for healing and repair.
- Exercise helps people fall asleep faster and sleep longer, so try to exercise each day but not too close to bedtime.

Spring 2026

January

- 16 Fri. Spring semester fees due
First payment due for those on payment plan
- 19 Mon. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day (no classes; campus closed)
- 20 Tues. First day of classes

February

- 16 Mon. Second fee payment due for those on payment plan
Presidents day (campus closed; no classes)
- 28 Sat. Final day to receive a 50% refund if completely withdrawing from the University

March

- 1 Sun. Commencement and graduation deadlines
- 16 Mon. Final day to request a 50% refund and completely withdraw
Third payment due for those on payment plan
- 31 Tues. Final day to change from credit to audit
Final day to drop classes and receive a "W"
- 21-29 Spring Break (no classes; campus open)

April

- 1 Wed. Fall 2027 enrollment begins
Final day to change from credit to audit
- 16 Thurs. Fourth/ Final fee payment due for those on payment plan

May

- 6 Wed. Prep. Day (no classes; campus open)
- 13 Wed. Instruction ends
- 14 Thurs. Commencement
- 15 Fri. Commencement
- 16 Sat. Commencement
- 18 Mon. Spring semester ends. Last day faculty on campus.

For the full calendar, please go to:
unr.edu/admissions/records/academic-calendar

Living On Campus



Why live with us?

Experience campus life ☀️

- ✓ Financial | All inclusive billing through MYNEVADA, financial aid may be applied to housing and meal plans
- ✓ Safety | Peace of mind, housing on campus for UNR students only
- ✓ Dining | 20 locations on campus with Pack Place offering students all you care to eat dining experience
- ✓ Connections to Campus | Access to programming and events 24/7/365 with an entire department dedicated to student success and their safety
- ✓ Flexibility | 10 month lease allowing for flexible summers

housing@unr.edu (775) 784-1113 unr.edu/housing



Luckily, there are stress-reducing ways to support and guide students who are at this juncture. Here are six tips to suggest:

1 Relax.

No need to make this experience more traumatic than it already is. Remember that it's normal for the journey from major to career to twist and turn. Make an effort to keep things in perspective and you'll be able to share this attitude with your student.

2 Help them reflect on their past interests to shape their future.

One of the best strategies to use with college students is to encourage them to reflect on what they liked when they were younger, what they did in their spare time for fun, and what activities they participated in and why. Their past holds clues about the kinds of majors that might interest them. For example, someone who counseled their friends through difficult times may find themselves interested in psychology or social work. An athlete might gravitate to sports management or sports medicine.

3 Focus on passion, not perception.

The best way to erase self-doubt is to find a subject they like and that will help them build transferable skills. Ask what kinds of classes interest them the most and which classes challenge them to think and grow. Their answers should give them an idea of what they want to spend several years studying. A student who says they want to major in business "so my parents will leave me alone" is not a student who will be happy for long with their choice.

4 Compare degree plans and course descriptions.

Reading through the college's course catalog is another way to narrow their choices. The course catalog and degree requirements can be found on the school's website. If your student is choosing between economics and education, for example, suggest they read through the degree requirements, such as internships or foreign languages, to see which plan appeals to them more. Have them browse the course descriptions as well. They will spend a lot of time in their major courses and should be intrigued by the topics that await them there.

5 Connect with advisors and counselors regularly.

The academic advisor will help them navigate the process of completing a degree, and the career counselor can help them develop a plan to translate what they're learning to workplace needs. Meeting with both throughout college can keep your student on track and help them make any needed adjustments along the way.

6 Interview recent college graduates.

Some of the best advice about college majors comes from recent graduates. New graduates are likely to say that the skills they acquired in college (e.g., critical thinking, written communication, appreciation for diversity) are more important than the content knowledge they gained from their major. At the very least, their advice may ease the pressure to make a "right choice."

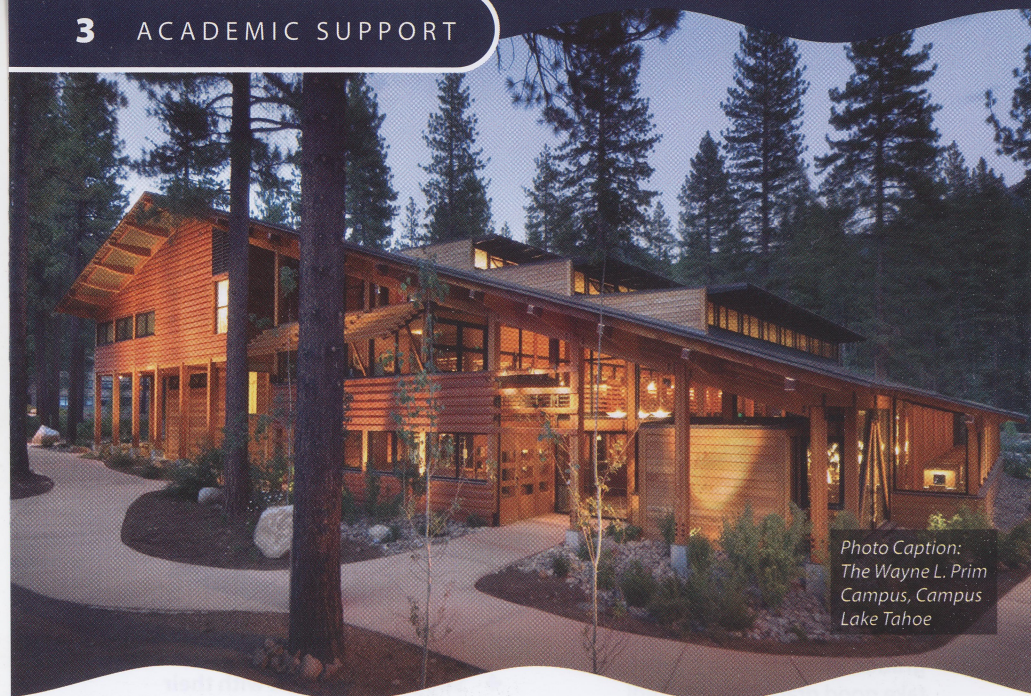


Photo Caption:
The Wayne L. Prim
Campus, Campus
Lake Tahoe

Choosing a Major

Six Tips for Guiding Your Student

Every parent wants their student to find their "calling" and click with a major that will help pave the way to a career. Students want that, too! But the process of declaring a major can be scary as well as exhilarating.

Amy Baldwin, Ed.D.

"Am I making the right choice?" they wonder anxiously. "Will I be able to find a job after graduation?" And then there is the classic question from well-meaning family and friends: "What are you going to do with that?"

For students whose majors are clear pathways to careers (think nursing or accounting), the last question can be answered easily. However, for undecided students worried not only about choosing the "right" major but also about how their degree will prepare them for employment someday, the question can increase their self-doubt. And with self-doubt comes even more anxiety.

SAVE THE DATE!

October 9-12, 2025



Join us for this special event designed to bring together students and their families for a weekend filled with fun, learning, and community.



maps.unr.edu

**EXPLORE NEW
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Navigate campus with ease using interactive maps, point-to-point wayfinding, virtual tours, parking details, and more.





Wolf Pack Traditions

Among the many traditions at the University of Nevada, two stand out as particularly crucial, and we'll share them with you here.

The Nevada Wolf Pack

The Nevada Wolf Pack is one of only two teams nationally to use the designation (North Carolina State is the other, though they use Wolfpack as one word while Nevada uses two words with a capital 'P'). It has been using the Wolf Pack designation since at least the early 1920s.

Nevada's first athletic teams in the late 1890s and early 1900s were called the Sagebrushers or even the Sage Hens after Nevada's state flowering plant, the sagebrush. There are references in print to the 'Sage Warriors,' although none of these names were the official mascot of Nevada's athletic teams.

In the 1921–22 athletic season, a local writer described the spirited play of the Nevada team as a 'pack of wolves.' The name stuck, and the Nevada Wolves soon made almost every reference to the athletic teams. In 1923, the students officially designated 'Wolves' as the school's mascot.

Since all teams are a group of players, the word 'pack' followed quickly. In 1928–29, the Nevada student handbook referred to the athletic teams as the Wolf Pack, and two school songs were adopted, 'The Wolf Pack' and 'Here Comes the Wolf Pack.'

While the academic institution is known as the University of Nevada, Reno, its intercollegiate athletics teams are referenced as "Nevada."

After Midterms: Reflect and Move Forward

Midterms are over! Your student survived. How can you help them make sense of the information that midterm grades and assessments can provide?

- **Remember FERPA.** The Federal Educational Rights and Privacy Act gives students ownership of their academic information. Grades go directly to your student, not to you. Ask whether they are willing to share their grades and talk about them.
- **If your student has great midterm grades, congratulate them.** Don't take good grades for granted!
- **If they're not sure about their midterm standing,** or question a grade, encourage them to talk to their professor.
- **Remind them that midterms come at the calendar midpoint** but not necessarily at the midpoint in the coursework. There may be more than

half of the work left — an opportunity to raise their grade by doing well.

- **Do they need to make changes in order to get back on track?** You can help your student interpret what midterm information is telling them they need to do. When they think about all of their courses together, are most grades solid with one low grade? Focus on that course. Are there several poor grades? Think about the amount of time spent studying or approaches to studying.
- **Suggest they meet with their academic advisor.** Is pass/fail an option? Should they consider [withdrawing from a class](#)? Should they think more carefully about which courses to take next term based on difficulties and successes this go-round?

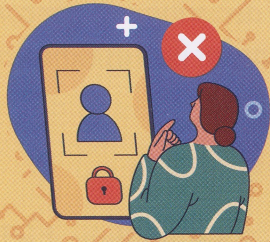
— Vicki Nelson



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Mid-Semester Conversations

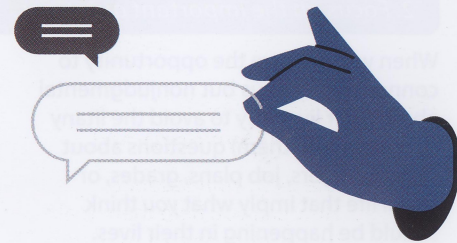
Halfway through fall semester is a good time to check in with your first-year student — and also a time when they may need extra emotional support.

Midterms matter for a few reasons. The midterm grade can be a reality check about how well (or not) they're doing in a class. One of the biggest differences between high school and college academics is that students may not receive as much feedback on their work throughout the semester. Some classes may even have only a midterm and final exam.

Before Midterms: Coping with Stress

Studying for midterms is a chance for students to solidify their grasp on material covered so far in a course and check for any gaps in their understanding. They'll find out whether their study habits are working or if they need to make changes for the second half of the semester.

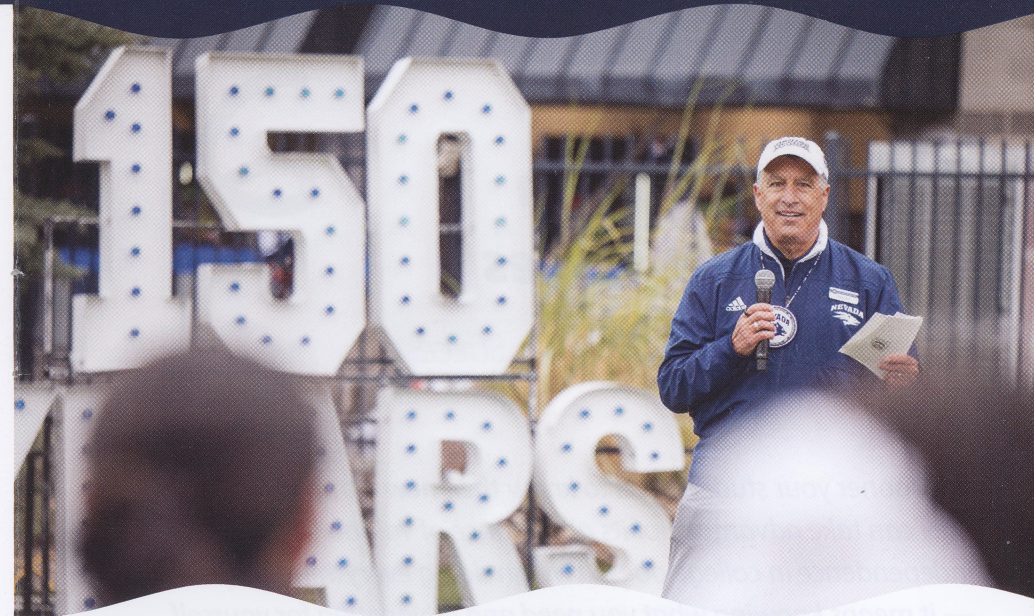
There's no getting around it, though; stress levels ratchet up as midterms approach and students focus on just how much they have to get done. Exams are around the corner, projects and big papers



are due, and your student might also discover that they have a few overlooked assignments or textbook chapters they didn't get around to reading.

While some students thrive on pressure, for others it can feel debilitating. Students need to develop their own strategies for dealing with stress (learn more on [pg 30](#)), but parents can provide guidance and support.

- **If they want to talk, sympathize with their challenges.** Listen a lot. They may just need to vent about how much they have on their plate.
- **Steer them to resources.** Encourage them to attend study sessions and faculty office hours and get individual tutoring in subjects where they're struggling. Recognize that they need to figure this out. If they fail an exam, it will be part of their learning process and they'll be stronger and wiser later.
- **Provide perspective.** Midterm stress is part of the rhythm of the academic year. It will pass and things will get better. And though midterms are important, there is other work in the course, and the semester is only half over. Most students won't fail a course because of one exam.
- **Send a care package** or gift card for a coffee shop or restaurant they like in town.



WOLF PACK™

The Law of the Jungle

"The Law of the Jungle" is a poem from Rudyard Kipling's *The Jungle Book*. The student section leads a chant before each home football and basketball game.

Now, this is the **Law of the Jungle**:

*As old and as true as the sky;
And the Wolf that shall keep
it may prosper, but the Wolf
that shall break it must die.
As the creeper that girdles the
tree-trunk the Law runneth
forward and back —
For the strength of the Pack
is the Wolf, and the strength
of the Wolf is the Pack.*

A wolf's howl follows the chorus played over the stadium sound system and echoed throughout the venue by the fans in attendance.

For the full list of Wolf Pack Traditions, go to: nevadawolfpack.com/sports/2021/8/26/wolf-pack-traditions.aspx

Get Familiar with Campus Resources

Your Student's Road Map to Success

The sooner your student gets to know their new campus, the sooner they can take advantage of its abundance of valuable resources. Independence in college doesn't mean doing everything on your own — it means knowing what you need and advocating for yourself.



Parents should also learn their way around, at least virtually. Encourage your student to create their own personal map. Before classes start, they can:

- ➔ Get comfortable with the university website.
- ➔ Study the online interactive campus map (print a copy, too).
- ➔ Practice walking through their course schedule so they know how to get from building to building and also figure out where to get meals.
- ➔ Make a list of other places to locate and explore: libraries, writing center, health and counseling, fitness and recreation, registrar's office, career services, tech support, public safety.
- ➔ Do some more walking — maybe with a roommate or new friend. It'll be a confidence booster to know their way around without having to constantly consult their phone.

People and Places

These six resources should be on your student's personal map. Talk to them about being the truly wise student who will make the most of each.

Professors

Professors teach, but they also set aside office hours to get to know students and to provide help. Unfortunately, many students don't take advantage of this one-on-one time with the professor. Your student shouldn't feel shy; professors really do want to talk to their students! Using office hours allows students to get individual attention and targeted help with course material.

Wise student hint: *Arrive for any meeting with the professor with specific questions. Bring papers or tests you want to talk over, and be prepared to listen and take notes. Don't forget to thank the professor when you leave.*

2. Focus on the important questions.

When you do have the opportunity to connect, be curious but nonjudgmental about their lives. Try to avoid the litany of pressing (to them) questions about classes, majors, job plans, grades, or social life that imply what *you* think should be happening in their lives.

Instead, ask the questions that really matter: Are you happy? What are you liking best? Anything that is harder than you expected? Can I help you in any way? These questions communicate curiosity and openness to their experience, and express that your concern is for their well-being not their achievement or success.



3. Invite, don't demand.

One key goal these years is to create a relationship in which kids are spending time with us because they want to, not because they feel they have to. In order to create this culture, we must first acknowledge and honor that they may not want or need to talk to us regularly, to come home over breaks, or to participate as consistently in family events or traditions as we'd like.

Once we let go of the assumption that they must and reframe to we'd like them to, it can alter how we communicate. Instead of "I expect you to come home for the holidays" or "You need to go see Grandma when you're home," consider "Do you think you'll come home for the holidays? We hope so!" and "I know Grandma's hoping you have time to visit with her."

4. Create the home base they want to come back to.

If home remains a place they feel safe, can rest and recharge, and can connect with favorite foods/traditions/people, then they will want to return. If home becomes a place of obligation or intrusive questions, they may not be eager. Not sure what your college student needs? Just ask.

An example: The first time my college daughter came home, I stocked up on all her favorite snacks then was flabbergasted when her first morning home she went to the grocery store and returned with items I'd never seen her eat before. These days I shoot her a text a day or two before she comes home: "Heading to the store. Any special requests?" This lets her know I want to "mom" her a bit but also allows her to have new tastes and preferences, like oat milk instead of half-and-half in her coffee.

Building a Bridge

On the last night of that Thanksgiving visit, my 19-year-old sat near me at the kitchen counter sending emails while I unloaded the dishwasher. She started talking about her classes and her plans for declaring a major next term. She volunteered a little about a breakup she'd gone through, and from what she said I could tell she'd gotten needed support from her roommates. I asked a question here and there but mostly listened. After a while her phone dinged with an incoming call, she left to answer it, and the conversation was over.

She left the next day. She gave me a huge hug goodbye at the airport and several hours later texted from her dorm: "Back safely! It was such a great trip home. I love you!"

—Amy Mezulis

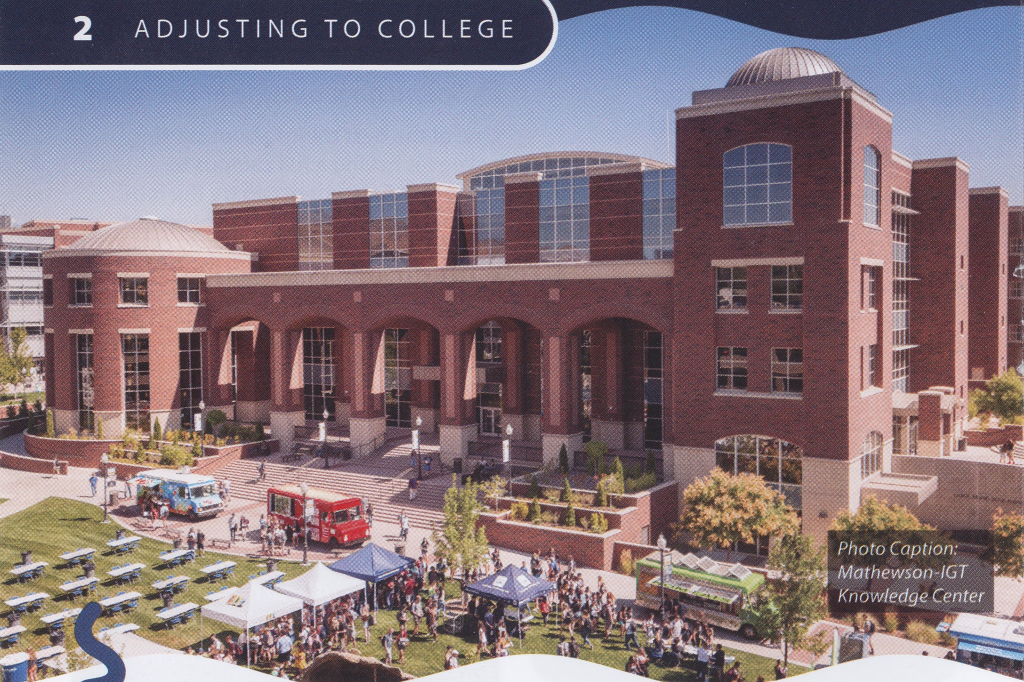


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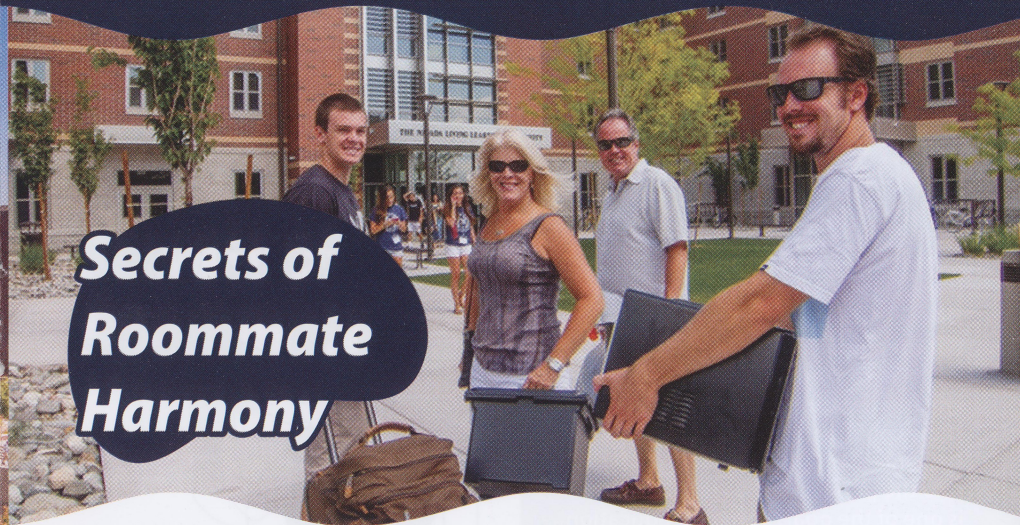
Learning to Manage Money

For first-year students, one of the biggest challenges outside the classroom is learning to manage money. They're now responsible for paying for all sorts of things on their own, from textbooks and groceries to laundry and an occasional haircut.

They're also responsible for their university Student Account and making sure tuition and fees are paid on time. If you're paying these bills, your student can add you as an Authorized User, but keeping them in the loop about college costs is a great way to help them gain financial literacy and understand the investment you're making as a family in their education.

Beyond this, parents can play a key role by helping students make a budget and keep an eye on the money going in and out of their bank account. Printable budget worksheets are easy to find online, and there are many good smartphone budgeting apps.

Secrets of Roommate Harmony



Living with a roommate is sure to be a rewarding but also challenging part of your first-year student's transition to college. Harmony is possible! Here are five tips to share, gathered from upper-level students.

1 Go in with an open mind.

Many students assume their roommate assignment will make or break their first year, imagining worst-case scenarios, best-case scenarios, and everything in between. Encourage your student to enter their new living situation with optimism and openness. College is a new experience for everyone and, if nothing else, their first-year roommate is someone who can make them feel less lonely during their adjustment.

"If you shake off your expectations, you'll have a more natural and positive relationship. I loved my freshman roommate, but even people I know who didn't learned more about themselves and learned to live with others better in the process." — Sophomore

2 Make rules before problems arise.

Unspoken expectations are at the root of a lot of conflict. Your student should make their needs clear while also remaining open to their roommate's preferences. If they didn't already complete a roommate agreement, covering things like cleanliness, quiet hours, visitors, etc., now's the time. Their RA can be a great resource for advice and conflict resolution if needed.

"My roommate stayed up later than me most nights, and I had a hard time sleeping with her desk light on. Finally I asked if she could go to the common room on our floor to study if I was trying to sleep. She was really understanding, and it made living with her a lot easier." — Sophomore

Advice for Parents from "The Dorm Mom"

Campus housing staff know that the first semester of college can be a nerve-racking time for parents not used to being apart from their kids. We're there for you even as we encourage you to step back a bit to show confidence and trust in your student. Giving them space to develop into the person they desire to become is one of the goals of higher education.

A few things it can be helpful to understand about residential life:

- If a student experiences a problem, housing staff will not contact parents; it's the student's responsibility to communicate with their family. Housing staff can call parents for drug- and alcohol-related issues or when a student is a danger to themselves or others.
- Residential life staff do not keep tabs on students and can not give parents access to a student's room. You will worry less if you take time during these early days of college to make a plan with your student about how often you'll text or talk.

College is a time of growth, and campus housing is the perfect supportive space for this growth to happen. Your student will learn to do things on their own, whether it's doing laundry or navigating a roommate conflict.

—Latina Rogers



Be respectful of your shared space.

For many people, college is the first time sharing a room. Behaviors that seem harmless to one person can be annoying for another. In the first few weeks as they establish a routine, roommates should be prepared to make some compromises. There are lots of little things you can do to show consideration to your roommate:

- Use headphones when they are in the room
- Ask before borrowing things
- Take out trash before it smells
- Don't snooze your alarm
- Ask if it's okay before taking a call
- Check in before bringing other people into the room

—With contributions from
Kate Gallop, Bridget Lockhead,
and CollegiateParent staff

Recognize that a good roommate and a good friend are different things.

Living with someone is very different from being friends. Some of the best roommate relationships are between students who don't have a lot in common but respect each other and live well together regardless.

"At the start of freshman year, my roommate and I would go to events and grab food together, but as the year progressed we met more people, made different friends, and hung out less. Even then, it was so nice to come back to my room and have someone to talk to about my day." — Junior

Spend time outside of the room.

One of the best things about starting college is having a full campus to explore. Your student can try the food in different cafeterias and experiment with different places to study. On that subject, most students find that it's easier to concentrate if they study outside of the dorm. Preserving their dorm room as a place where they can relax is also beneficial, and leaving the room during the day and spending time away from roommates can make getting along easier.

"Get to know your roommate, but get to know other people, too. Find clubs or other activities to do that aren't with your roommate so you both have space and alone time in your room." — Junior

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A New Role for Parents

Just before Thanksgiving break last year, I received a flurry of texts from my college student.

Daughter: "I'm so excited to come home!"

Me: "YAY!"

Daughter: "Please don't ask a million questions. I'll talk more if you don't pester me."

Me: "Ummm...okay?"

As a developmental psychologist, I had a good chuckle. The contrast of the enthusiasm to come home with the preemptive "don't bug me" so perfectly exemplifies this college age — no longer a child, but not quite all grown up either.

As a parent, honestly, I appreciated her clear statement about what she needed from me. She knew I'd have a million questions, and she also knew she didn't want to have to talk on demand.

Parents of college-aged kids have to walk a fine line between letting go and continuing to provide the safety net for their inevitable stumbles.

What does it mean to parent a young adult child? How can we foster strong and supportive relationships?

Tips for Strengthening Relationships with College Students

1. Give space — and mean it.

Letting our young adult kids set the pace on contact gives them some much-desired control. After so many years of their time not being their own, college kids relish the opportunity to do what they want when they want.

If they don't respond to your "just checking in" texts or phone calls, rather than upping the frequency, consider slowing it down. Understand they're not being ungrateful or uncaring — they are just absorbed in their own lives, as is normal. They are also learning to rely on others for support.

Have an open and gentle conversation about how much communication you can both agree to. One scheduled and valued FaceTime call a week will feel better in the long run than daily texts that go unanswered and build resentment.

Academic Advisor

Your student's academic advisor will help them make important decisions such as choosing a major, selecting appropriate classes, and staying on track for their degree. An academic advisor can be an excellent partner during your student's college career, but only if they take advantage of the advisor's guidance and know-how.

Wise student hint: *Even if your advisor is wonderful, don't rely solely on their information. Understand the curriculum and any Gen Ed/major/degree requirements and keep your own records to stay on track. It's also important to know how to calculate your GPA.*

Tutoring and Writing Centers

Most tutoring centers offer help in many subjects and provide both professional and peer tutoring services. Peer tutors are fellow students who've done well in the subject and understand the struggles that students encounter. Writing centers offer help with organizing and editing papers. Working with a tutor can help your student build confidence and improve their study skills and can provide accountability to help them keep up with assignments.

Wise student hint: *Start working with a tutor early in the semester before encountering real difficulty. This will help you establish a relationship with a tutor and be comfortable with the tutoring process well before midterm or final exam time.*




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College Library

Beyond the many online services, internet resources, and databases offered by the campus library, a visit to the physical building can uncover additional resources. Libraries provide quiet study spaces apart from the noise and distractions in the residence hall. Most also offer group study areas where students can work with others on projects or exam preparation. Librarians are trained to guide students through essential research steps and help them discover and access materials.

Wise student hint: Librarians love questions. Bring your assignment with you and be specific about what you need to find. If you don't know how to use a library resource, ask.

Wellness Services

Most campus health centers offer onsite medical care for illness and minor injuries, mental health/counseling services (possibly in a separate location), and general wellness education. In addition, the health center may provide prescriptions and over-the-counter medications, reproductive health care, nutrition counseling, vaccinations (including COVID and flu shots), and more.

Wise student hint: Locate the health and counseling centers early, before you need them. Ask about how to make appointments, what services are available, and what the hours are. This way if you are sick or dealing with a mental health challenge, you'll already be familiar with the process and staff.

Career Center

Campus career services are an essential link between your student's academic work and their future career. The career center can help your student discover strengths and talents, explore careers within a chosen major, find and apply for on- and off-campus jobs and internships, craft resumes and cover letters, network with alumni, and practice interviewing skills.

Wise student hint: Visit the [career center](#) early to learn what they offer. Return regularly to take advantage of services and events and build relationships with staff members so they'll keep you in mind when they learn of new opportunities.

Hidden Gems

Hidden gems may not be on the map, but every campus and college town has them. Your student can ask other students and faculty members, "What's your favorite place on (or off) campus?" Find their special place. It might be:

- A quiet lounge or out-of-the-way corner of the library
- A walking or bike trail
- An art gallery or museum
- A music practice room or empty concert hall
- A chapel or meditation room
- A coffee shop
- A local park
- The town library

— Vicki Nelson

The Fall Spending-Money Budget

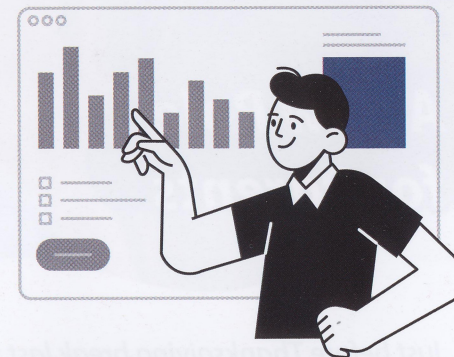
If you didn't do this before the start of the school year, take time now to make a list with your student of their flexible/recreational expenses (everything besides tuition, room, board, and student fees — although if they'll contribute to these, put them in the budget as well).

Flexible expenses include:

- Textbooks and software
- Seasonal clothing
- Electronics and school supplies
- Toiletries and other personal items
- Dorm furnishings
- Laundry money
- Food/drink outside of the meal plan
- Entertainment
- Local travel (bus pass, Uber trips)
- Recreational travel and trips home
- Sorority/fraternity or club dues

Next, estimate how much each item will be and agree on who's paying for what, taking your student's income into consideration. Their income will come from their savings, earnings from a campus job (if they will work), and possibly an allowance from you. Make it a goal for your student to maintain a certain level of savings.

The ease of buying things online and with their phones means small purchases can get out of control. Peer pressure is another factor that can cause students to overspend, so talk about how they may need to say no sometimes to an activity or purchase that a roommate or friend doesn't think twice about. On this subject, be clear about what will happen if they don't stay within



"Financial literacy can make the difference between building upon a good financial foundation from the start or learning from mistakes. It can help teens and young adults get through the ups and downs of life, and it provides a sense of security."

— Lisa Panicoia

Author of 'ABC's for Financial Independence'

their budget — in case they assume you'll automatically bail them out.

Fall semester will involve some experimentation. Your student may easily stay within their budget or run short each month. Over winter break, you can look back together at the experience and help them revise their budget for spring semester based on what they learned.